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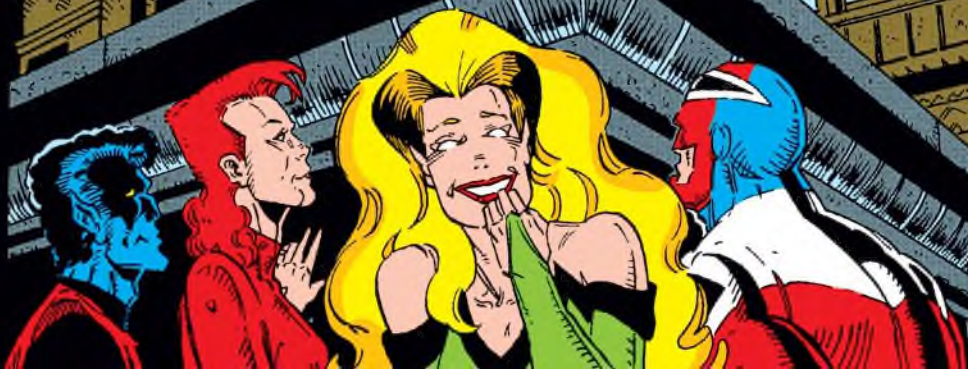
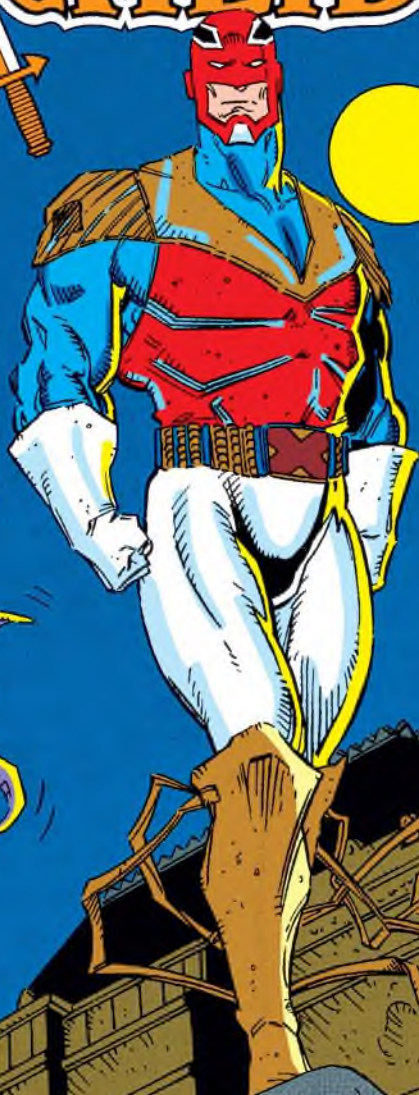
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APPROVED
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COMICS
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THE CROSS-TIME CAPER- EXCALIBUR

INTRODUCING...

CRUSADER X!



WOSNAK-TMILGROM

A STAN LEE PRESENTATION, STARRING **EXCALIBUR**

I LOVE LONDON IN THE MORNING.

WHEN THIS GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD IS STILL MORE ASLEEP THAN AWAKE, AND I CAN FOOL MYSELF INTO THINKING I HAVE ITS MAJESTY ALL TO MYSELF.

TO MY EYES, THERE'S NOTHING IN THE NEW WORLD-- AND PRECIOUS LITTLE IN THE OLD-- TO MATCH IT.

GIVES ME A THRILL TO KNOW THAT FATE'S SINGLED ME OUT TO BE ITS PROTECTOR.

THE EMPIRE'S FOREMOST SUPER HERO.

AL MILGROM, INKER
BRAD VANCATA, COLORIST
TOM ORZECOWSKI, LETTERER
TERRY KAVANAGH, EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO
LORD OF ALL HE SURVEYS
CHRIS CLAREMONT & ALAN DAVIS
CREATORS OF EXCALIBUR

CRUSADER

X

CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT, WRITER, & CHRIS WOZNIAK, PENCILER

THE IRONY, OF COURSE, BEING THAT MANY OF THESE SELFSAME PEOPLE WHO CHEER MY EXPLOITS AS CHAMPION OF THE REALM...

...WOULDN'T BE SEEN DEAD WITH ME IN MY "CIVILIAN IDENTITY."

EVEN THOUGH I'M HEIR TO ONE OF THE PROUDEST, MOST HONORED NAMES IN ENGLAND.

OR MORE LIKELY-- BECAUSE OF IT.



I DO A FAST OVERFLIGHT OF A PAIR OF OUT-LYING BOROUGH--STOP ONE SMASH--AND--GRAB, HELP THE FIRE BRIGADE WITH A RESCUE--

-- BEFORE TURNING WESTWARD UP THE THAMES.

LONDON MAY NOT BE THE PORT IT ONCE WAS...

...BUT THAT GRAND, ANCIENT RIVER STILL DEFINES...



EH?!

WHAT'S THAT...



... NOISE ?!



MILITARY HELICOPTERS-- --TRANSPORTS AND GUNSHIPS!

STRAIGHT LINE FLIGHT, FROM WATERLOO BRIDGE PAST THE BRITISH MUSEUM TO THEIR TOUCHDOWN IN EUSTON SQUARE.



TROOPERS HIT THE GROUND AS THOUGH GOING INTO A HOT COMBAT L.Z., LOADED FOR BEAR AND LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

I RECOGNIZED THEIR SHOULDER FLASHES-- WHO, THE WEIRD HAPPENINGS ORGANIZATION.

A SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT, DRAWING PERSONNEL FROM ALL THE SERVICES AND THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY AS WELL, WHOSE BRIEF WAS TO DEAL WITH ANY BEING OR INCIDENT THAT FELL OUTSIDE WHAT WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED "NORMAL."



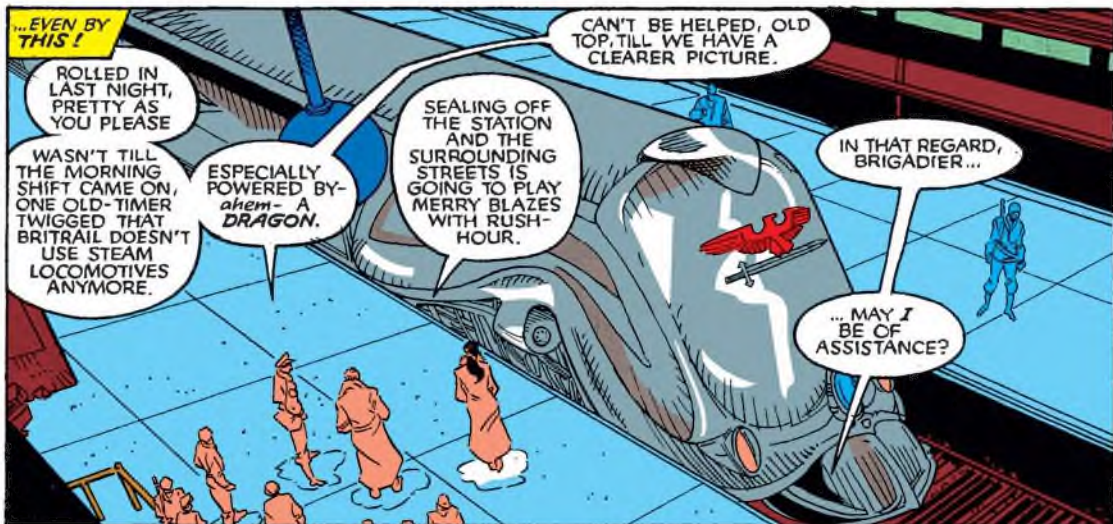
ALREADY ON-SCENE WAS WHO'S COMMANDER, BRIGADIER ALISTAIRE STUART...

...ITS CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER, HIS TWIN SISTER ALYSANDE...

...AND THEIR POLICE LIAISON, C.I.D.* COMMANDER DAI THOMAS--

-- NONE TOO HAPPY AT BEING SUMMARILY ROUSED FROM BED...

*C.I.D.: CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION (OF SCOTLAND YARD),--TERRY



...EVEN BY THIS!

ROLLED IN LAST NIGHT, PRETTY AS YOU PLEASE

WASN'T TILL THE MORNING SHIFT CAME ON, ONE OLD-TIMER TWIGGED THAT BRITRAIL DOESN'T USE STEAM LOCOMOTIVES ANYMORE.

ESPECIALLY POWERED BY-ahem- A DRAGON.

SEALING OFF THE STATION AND THE SURROUNDING STREETS IS GOING TO PLAY MERRY BLAZES WITH RUSH-HOUR.

CAN'T BE HELPED, OLD TOP, TILL WE HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE.

IN THAT REGARD, BRIGADIER...

... MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?



BLOODY MAHRVELOUS-- AS IF THE DAY WASN'T ENOUGH OF A MESS ALREADY!

ACTUALLY, COMMANDER, IT WAS MY INTENTION TO SUMMON CRUSADER-X.

WHY BOTHER EVEN HAVING POLICE THEN?

TURN OUR JOB OVER TO 'THE FLIPPIN' COSTUMES AN' HAVE DONE WITH IT!



PAY HIM NO MIND, CRUSADER.

DAI'S ALWAYS GRUMPY WHEN HE'S NOT HAD HIS BREKKERS.

SIMPLY SPEAKING MY MIND, STUART.

PLAIN AS I KNOW HOW.



I'M NOT THE ENEMY, COMMANDER.

NO-- IN TOO MANY WAYS, YOU'RE WORSE!

GIVE IT A REST, DAI.

ALL THIS TIME, HE STILL CAN'T FORGET...

...OR FORGIVE...



THAT HIS WIFE WAS KILLED IN A SUPER HERO BATTLE, I KNOW.

BUT HATING US WON'T BRING HER BACK, OR KEEP SUCH TRAGEDIES FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.

A MOST THOROUGH SEARCH, COMMANDER.

HAH-- BLOODY-HAH!

MY PEOPLE DIDN'T DO THIS, IT WAS HOW WE FOUND IT.

EQUALLY CLEAR EVIDENCE OF AN EXTREMELY ROUGH RIDE.

ANY SIGN OF INJURIES?

NOBODY ABOARD, BUT CLEAR EVIDENCE OF PASSENGERS.

NOT SO FAR.



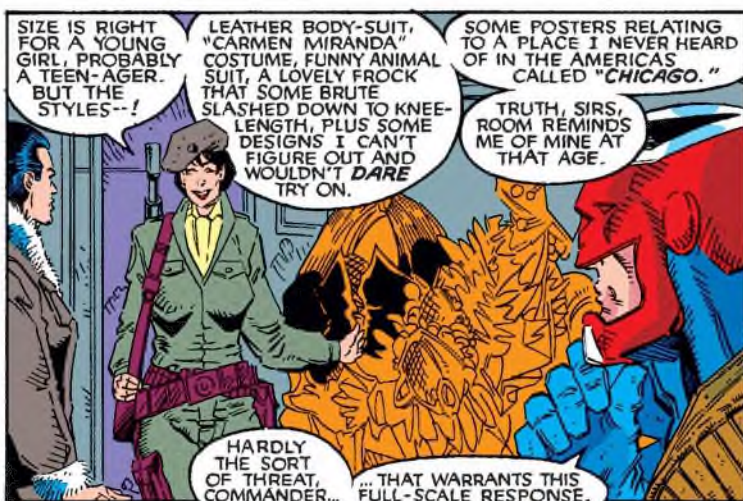
THIS CAR'S MAINLY SLEEPING BERTHS, SIR.

BIGGER THAN BRITRAIL STANDARD.

FLIPPIN' IMPOSSIBLE TO BE SMALLER, LUV.

THESE ARE MORE LIKE PROPER ROOMS.

REALLY WILD COLLECTION OF OUTFITS IN HERE.



SIZE IS RIGHT FOR A YOUNG GIRL, PROBABLY A TEEN-AGER. BUT THE STYLES--!

LEATHER BODY-SUIT, "CARMEN MIRANDA" COSTUME, FUNNY ANIMAL SUIT, A LOVELY FROCK THAT SOME BRUTE SLASHED DOWN TO KNEE-LENGTH, PLUS SOME DESIGNS I CAN'T FIGURE OUT AND WOULDN'T DARE TRY ON.

SOME POSTERS RELATING TO A PLACE I NEVER HEARD OF IN THE AMERICAS CALLED "CHICAGO."

TRUTH, SIRS, ROOM REMINDS ME OF MINE AT THAT AGE.

HARDLY THE SORT OF THREAT, COMMANDER...

...THAT WARRANTS THIS FULL-SCALE RESPONSE.



FAT LOT YOU KNOW, MATE!

RECOGNIZE THIS?

NIGHTCRAWLER, CRUSADER--ONE OF IMPERIAL PRUSSIA'S TOP AGENTS!

YOU SUGGESTING THAT HIS PRESENCE ON THE EVE OF THE QUEEN'S CONVENING A SUMMIT OF THE GREAT POWERS...

...IS A COINCIDENCE?

TO BE DEALT WITH AS BUSINESS AS BLEEDING USUAL?

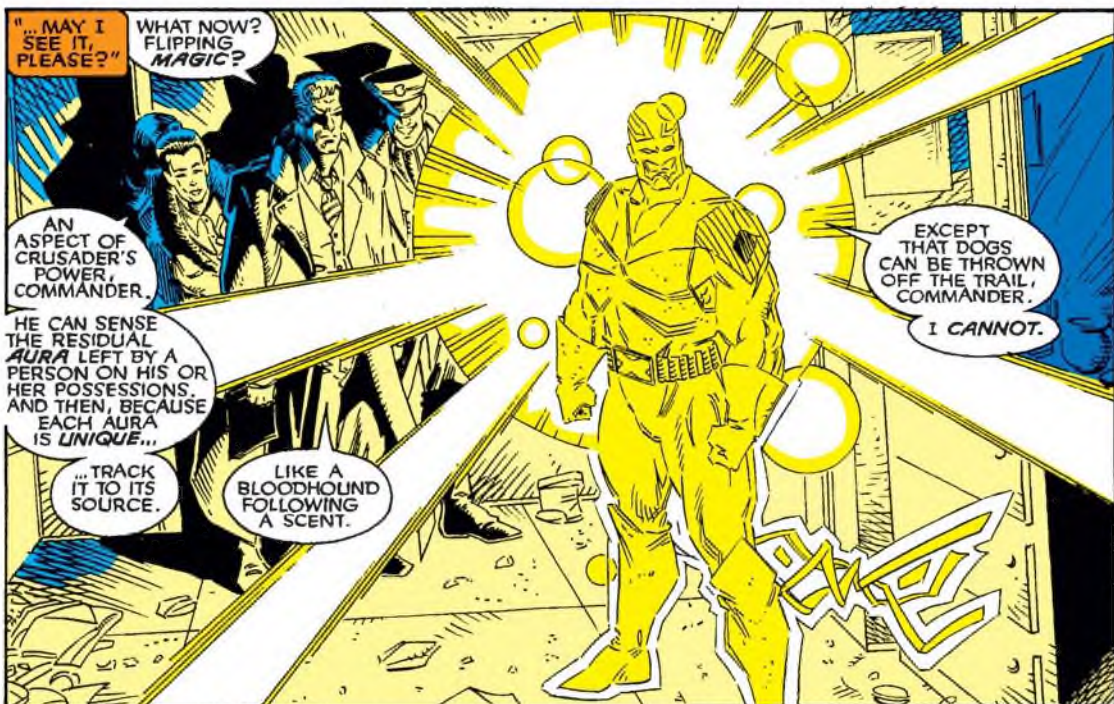


I STAND CORRECTED.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU'RE QUITE CORRECT.

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE THE SLIGHTEST CHANCES.

IF YOU'VE IDENTIFIED WHICH COMPARTMENT IS HIS...



"MAY I SEE IT, PLEASE?"

WHAT NOW? FLIPPING MAGIC?

AN ASPECT OF CRUSADER'S POWER, COMMANDER.

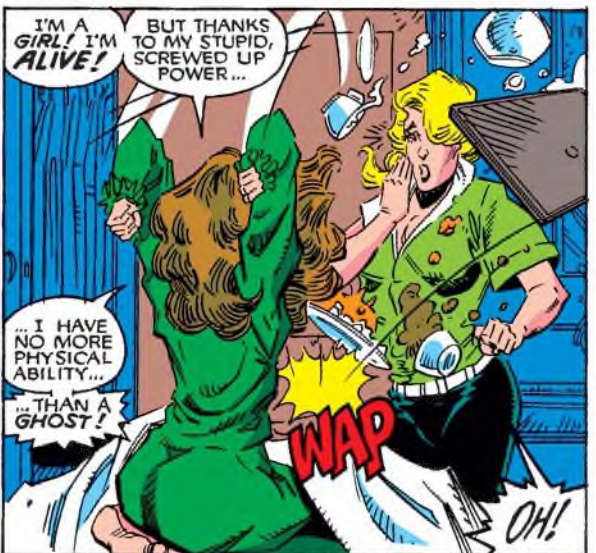
HE CAN SENSE THE RESIDUAL AURA LEFT BY A PERSON ON HIS OR HER POSSESSIONS AND THEN, BECAUSE EACH AURA IS UNIQUE...

TRACK IT TO ITS SOURCE.

LIKE A BLOODHOUND FOLLOWING A SCENT.

EXCEPT THAT DOGS CAN BE THROWN OFF THE TRAIL, COMMANDER.

I CANNOT.





SORRY ABOUT THAT. I HOPE NOTHING'S RUINED.

MAKES ME SO CRAZY SOMETIMES, THIS BEING INTANGIBLE AS MY NATURAL STATE.

FIND MYSELF ASKING WHY I BOTHER MAKING THE EFFORT TO FOCUS MYSELF SOLID.

BUT BRIAN TOLD ME YOU NEARLY DIED...

...FROM THE WOUNDS THAT CREATED THIS CONDITION.

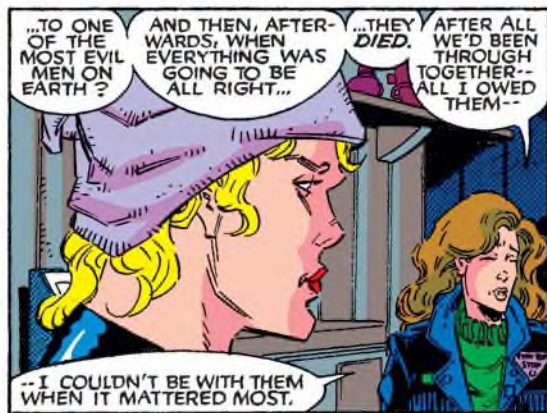


AND THE FACT IS, YOU'RE RECOVERING. SOMEDAY, YOU'LL BE NORMAL AGAIN.

ISN'T THAT GOAL WORTH THIS... INCONVENIENCE?

"INCONVENIENCE."

D'YOU KNOW, COURTNEY, TO BRING ABOUT MY RECOVERY, THE X-MEN WERE WILLING TO SELL THEIR SOULS...



...TO ONE OF THE MOST EVIL MEN ON EARTH?

AND THEN, AFTERWARDS, WHEN EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT...

...THEY DIED.

AFTER ALL WE'D BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER-- ALL I OWED THEM--

--I COULDN'T BE WITH THEM WHEN IT MATTERED MOST.



EXCALIBUR REPRESENTED A NEW BEGINNING. A SECOND CHANCE.

ONLY NOW THEY'RE GONE, TOO. EXCEPT THIS TIME IT'S WORSE, BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM. MAYBE I SAVED THEM, MAYBE NOT.

IN MY IMAGINATION, I SEE THEM WANDERING THE DIMENSIONAL TIME-STREAMS FOREVER, NEVER KNOWING IF I'LL EVER SEE THEM AGAIN.

OVER AND OVER, I REACH OUT TO PEOPLE I LOVE, ONLY I CAN'T HOLD ON.

LIKE I REALLY AM A GHOST.



YOU STILL HAVE FAMILY...

MY FOLKS ARE IN THE FEDERAL WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM. I'M NOT ALLOWED TO SEE 'EM, ONLY LETTERS NOW AND THEN. IF I GO BACK TO THEM, I JOIN THE PROGRAM, TOO.

AND I LOVE BEING SHADOWCAT-- THE LIFE OF A SUPER HERO--

--TOO MUCH TO GIVE IT UP.

I'M AFRAID, COURTNEY. IF I GO TO THEM...

I'LL SOMEHOW DESTROY THEM, TOO!



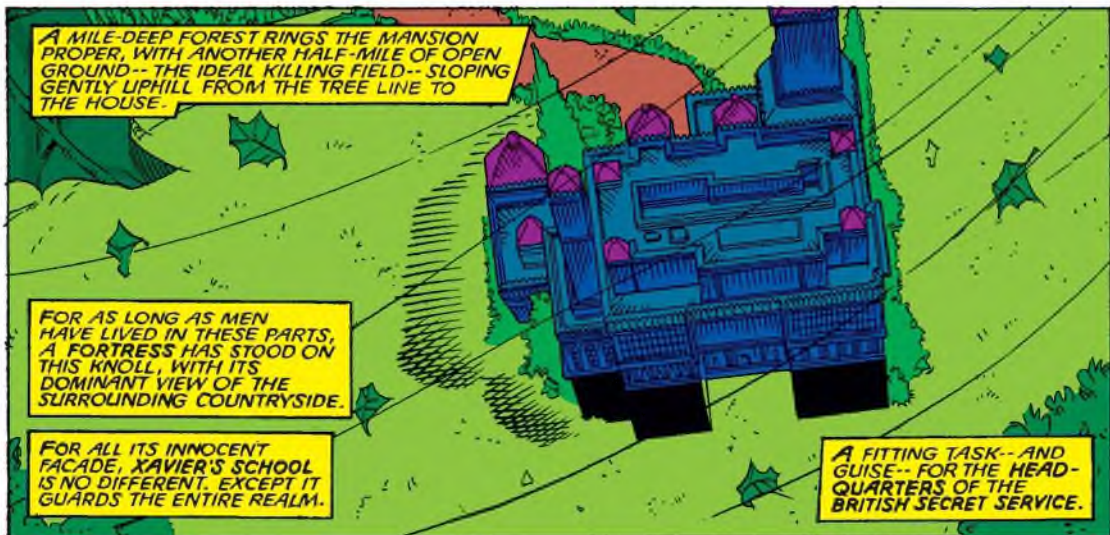
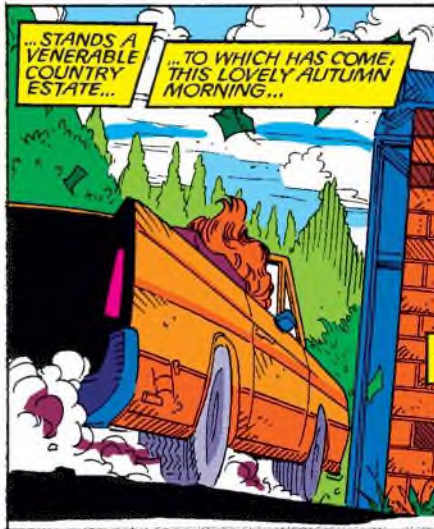
EVERYONE IS GONE BUT ME-- NO MORE TEAMMATES, NO MORE FRIENDS-- I'M ALL THAT'S LEFT!

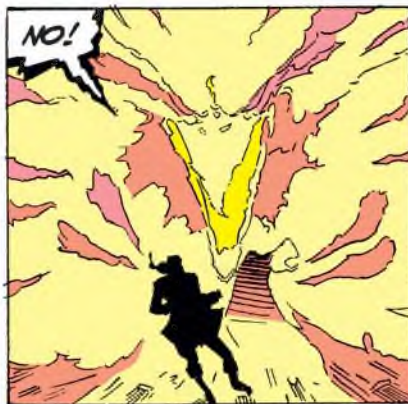
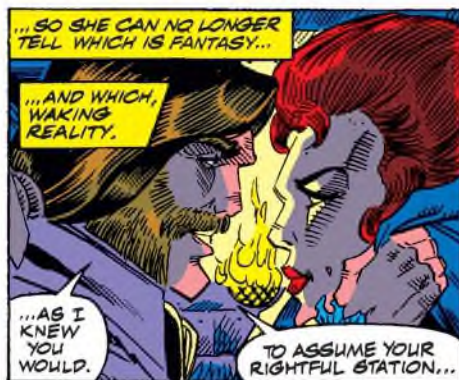
IT'S AS THOUGH I'VE GOT SOME TERRIBLE CURSE!

NO CURSE, POPPET, YOU KNOW THAT.

THERE THERE. IT'S ALL RIGHT. NO NEED TO BE AFRAID EITHER. IT'S ALL RIGHT BECAUSE SO LONG AS I'M WITH YOU...

...YOU'LL NEVER BE ALONE.







NO.
OH, NO!
NOT THIS TIME.
NOT AGAIN.



RACHEL-- --ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

THE PHOENIX-EFFECT IS FADING...

...AS SUDDENLY AS IT APPEARED.

ALL THESE PYROTECHNICS, JUST TO WHISTLE UP A NEW WARDROBE?

BE SERIOUS, CAPTAIN!



REST EASY, GIRL, LET PROFESSOR STUART...

I'M FINE, CAP. I DON'T NEED ANY LOOKING AFTER.

MY POWER AS PHOENIX TAKES CARE OF ME.

THEN I SUGGEST YOU TAKE A GOOD, LONG LOOK AT YOURSELF.

BECAUSE IT'S NOT DOING ITS PROPER JOB!

YOU CRIED OUT.

IT WAS JEAN GREY.

THIS DIMENSION'S ANALOGUE OF MY MOM!



THE GENETIC LINK BETWEEN MOTHER AND DAUGHTER MUST HOLD TRUE REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU COME FROM ALONG THE CROSS-TIME STRING.

I TELEPATHICALLY HEARD HER CRY OUT.

SHE WAS IN DEADLY DANGER.

FROM WHOM?

WHO ELSE, NIGHT-CRAWLER, WHERE JEAN GREY'S CONCERNED?

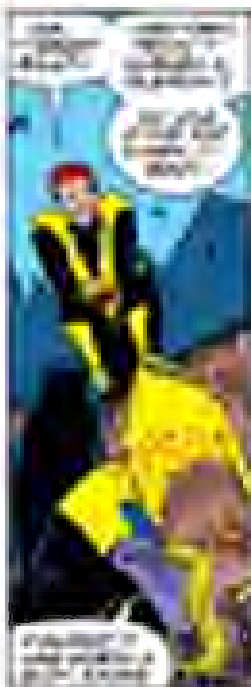
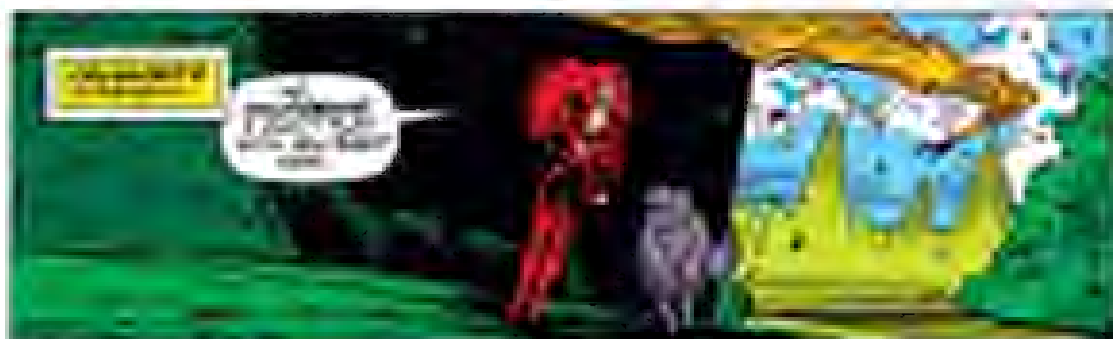
MASTERMIND.



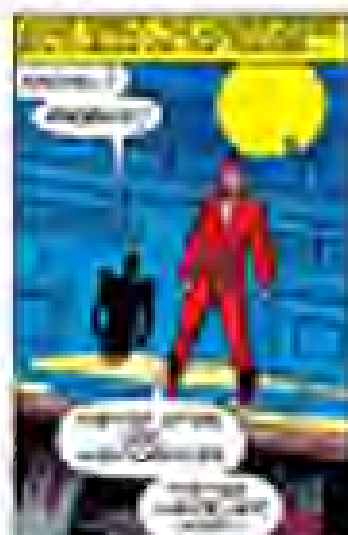


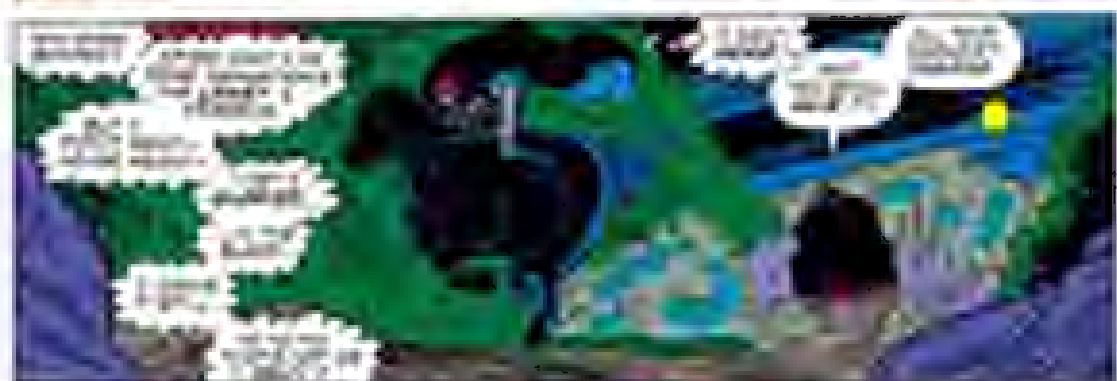








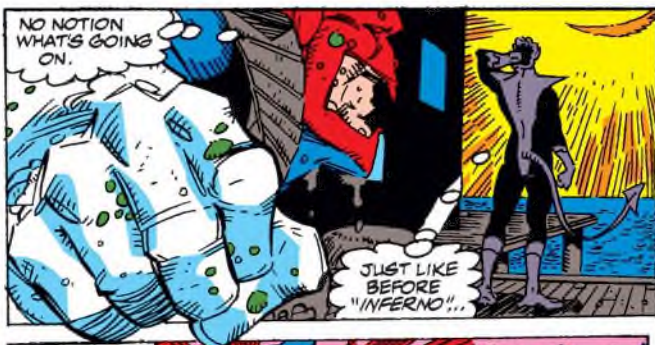






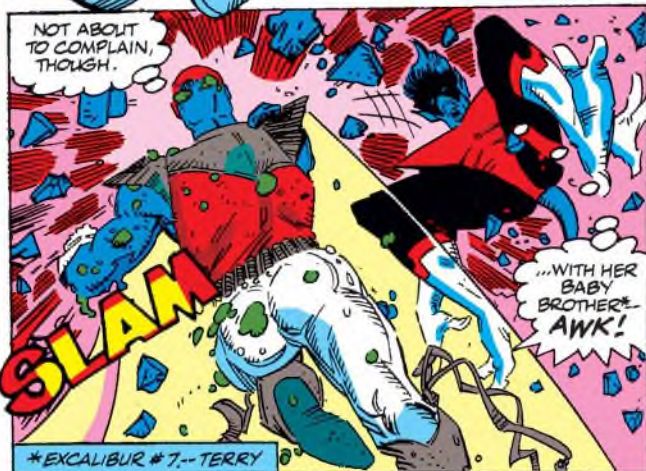
RACHEL!

TOTALLY
SWEEP AWAY...
...BY HER
EMOTIONS.



NO NOTION
WHAT'S GOING
ON.

JUST LIKE
BEFORE
"INFERNO"...



NOT ABOUT
TO COMPLAIN,
THOUGH.

...WITH HER
BABY
BROTHER--
AWK!

*EXCALIBUR #7--TERRY



SAME BASIC
LOOK AS OUR
CAPTAIN.

SAME BASIC
APPROACH
TO COMBAT.

EVIDENTLY
SOME THINGS...
...ARE
OMNIVERSAL
CONSTANTS.

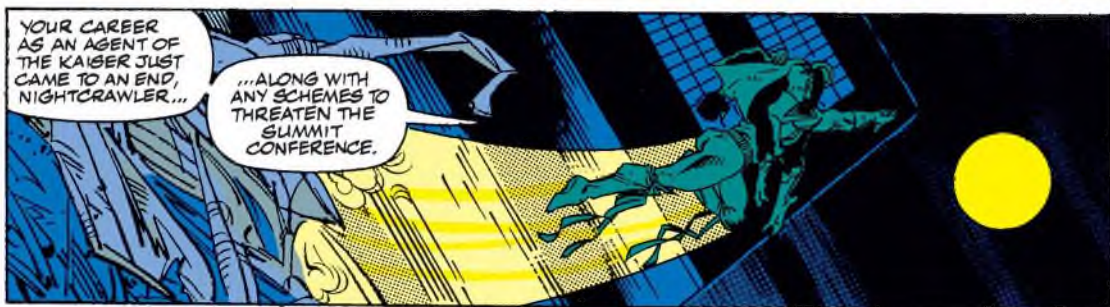


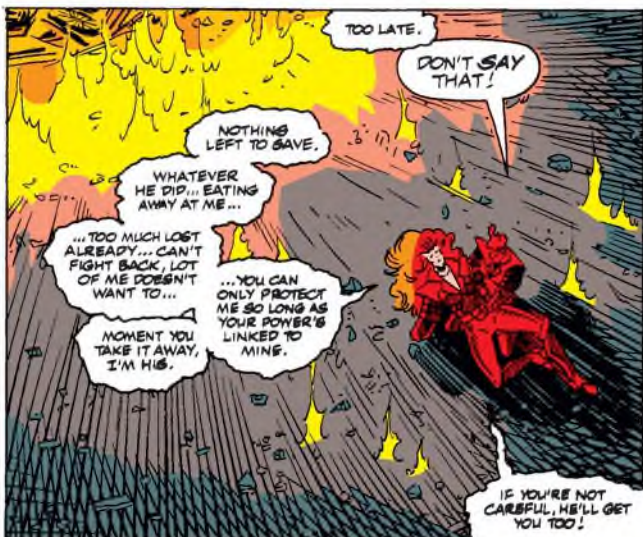
MY AGILITY
GIVES ME AN
EDGE, THANK
HEAVEN.

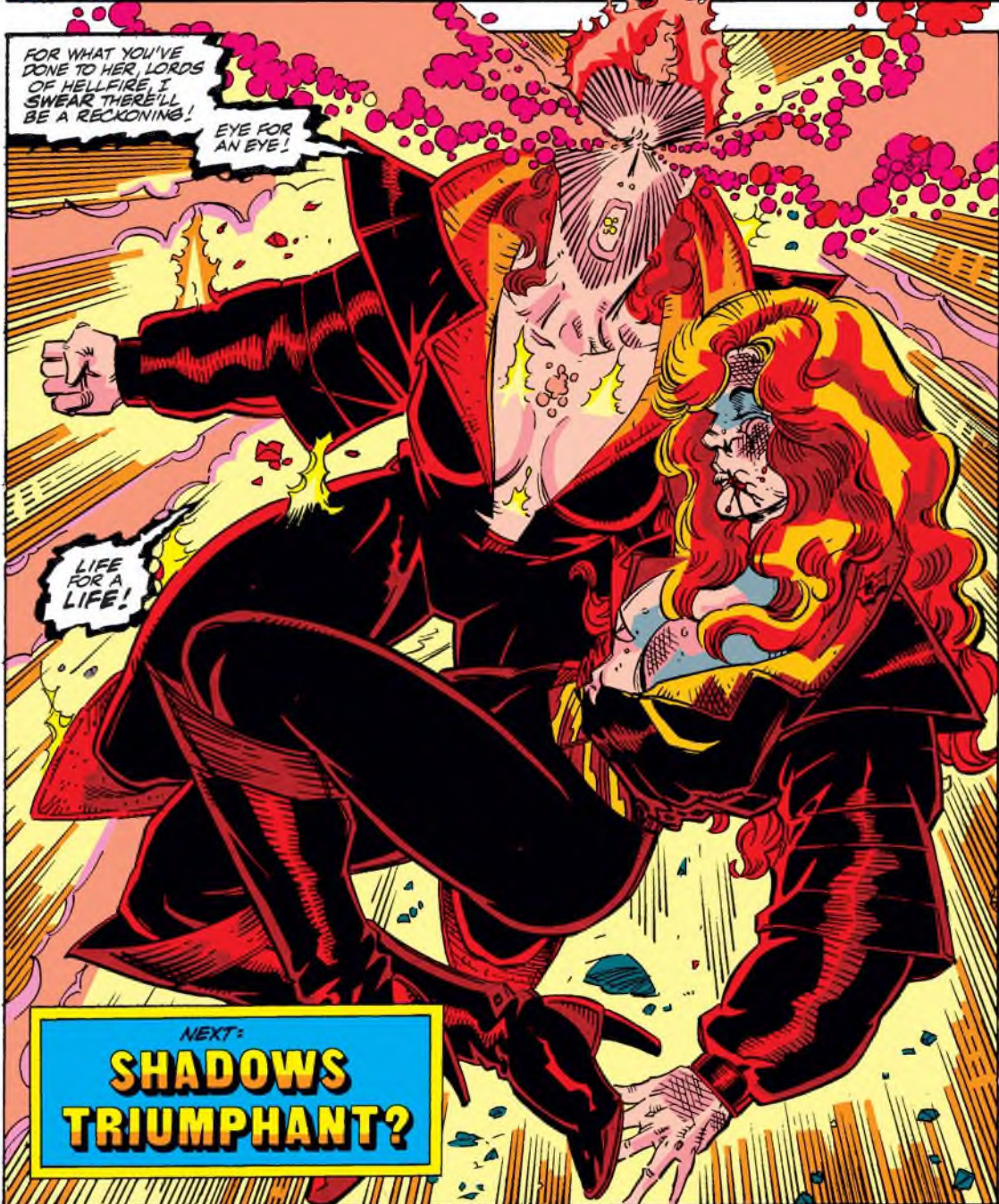
BUT FOR
HOW LONG?

IF YOU THINK YOUR
JACKRABBIT STUNTS
WILL SAVE YOU,
PRUSSIAN--

--YOU'RE SADLY
MISTAKEN!







NEXT:
**SHADOWS
TRIUMPHANT?**